

Seaton Munroe

(- 3 Apr 1896)

Munroe. In this city suddenly on the evening of April 3, 1896, Seaton Munroe in the 57th year of his age. Notice of funeral hereafter.

The Evening Star, April 4, 1896

Death of Seaton Munroe

A Well-Known Washingtonian Expires Suddenly

An Autopsy Ordered to Settle Rumors that the Deceased Committed Suicide

Mr. Seaton Munroe died suddenly last night at the Hotel Arno, on 16th street. He entered the buffet of the hotel shortly before 11 o'clock and conversed for some time with Mr. Philip Roche, the proprietor. He was bright and cheerful, and went out apparently on his way home. He stopped, however, in the washroom, and it was here that he was stricken, for his dead body was found in this apartment by Mr. Roche at midnight. Dr. Acker was immediately called in, and in the meantime efforts were made to resuscitate Mr. Munroe, but he was beyond all aid, and when the doctor arrived he pronounced him dead. The body was taken in charge by the authorities, and Mr. Munroe's friends and relatives were notified, whereupon the remains were removed to Gawler's undertaking establishment, where they were viewed today by Coroner Hammett. Dr. Hammett said there was no doubt that Mr. Munroe's death had been caused by a stroke of apoplexy, but that in order to set at rest the suggestions that had been given publication to the effect that the dead man had committed suicide he would have an autopsy performed, and for this purpose he notified Dr. Glazebrook, who will make the examination this afternoon.

The funeral arrangements were taken in charge by Co. Malcolm Seaton, an uncle of the deceased, who was very much affected by the death of his nephew. The funeral will take place from All Souls' Church next Monday afternoon, and the pallbearers will be selected from the members of the Metropolitan Club, of which Mr. Munroe had been a member since 1871, and his numerous friends outside of that organization.

Mr. Munroe was about sixty years of age, and from the time he entered his teens was one of the best-known people in Washington, a leader in fashionable society and a welcomed guest to all gatherings. He was the son of Columbus Munroe, a leading citizen of the District, and his mother was Josephine Seaton, the daughter of W.W. Seaton, who, with Joseph Gales, published the famous National Intelligencer. Young Munroe was finely educated, and after completing his classical courses was graduated from the Harvard law school, and, while regarded as a lawyer of superior attainments, he did not practice his profession for any length of time. He was a man of extreme genial disposition and elegant manners, and was a general favorite in club and special circles here for a third of a century. During the past few days he had been particularly bright and cheerful over the appearance in the North American Review of an article written by him, entitled "Recollections of Lincoln's Assassination." He spent Thursday evening visiting among his friends, including Mr. John A. Baker, and was in the best of spirits. His numerous friends are very indignant over the reports that Mr. Munroe had committed suicide, and especially was this the case among the members of the Metropolitan Club. Mr. Munroe had never married. His mother survives him, and resides in Maryland. He was connected by close ties of relationship with nearly all the leading families of the District, including the Hagners, the Hills, the Randalls, the Ramsays and others of high standing and distinction.

Forman, Stephen M., A Guide to Civil War Washington, Washington, DC: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1995.

Munroe attended the inquest on John Wilkes Booth aboard the U.S.S. Montauk. Seaton was the brother of Frank, and in spite of Secretary of War Stanton's tight security orders, Munroe was able to walk aboard the ship. Munroe's description of Booth's body was far different than the descriptions given by the other witnesses. Munroe stated that Booth's corpse was "unmarred by the agony of death and his handsome countenance also unmarred."

The New York Times, April 5, 1896

Sudden Death of Seaton Munroe

Washington, April 4 -- Seaton Munroe was found dead in the lavatory of the Arno Hotel this morning. Mr. Munroe, who had been in the café of the hotel before midnight, was missed, and a search was made. The cause of death was probably apoplexy.

Mr. Munroe was fifty-five years of age. His parents were Columbus Munroe and a daughter of W.W. Seaton, an editor of the old National Intelligencer. He was a graduate of Harvard Law School, and was regarded as quite a brilliant lawyer, although he had not practiced for many years. He was a member of the Metropolitan Club, and was welcome at the houses of Washington's oldest families.